


GILBERT, JOHANNES

DRAWING 22

SCULPTORS - G  
(Busts)

NY. 2002. 085. 02516



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# Statues of Abraham Lincoln

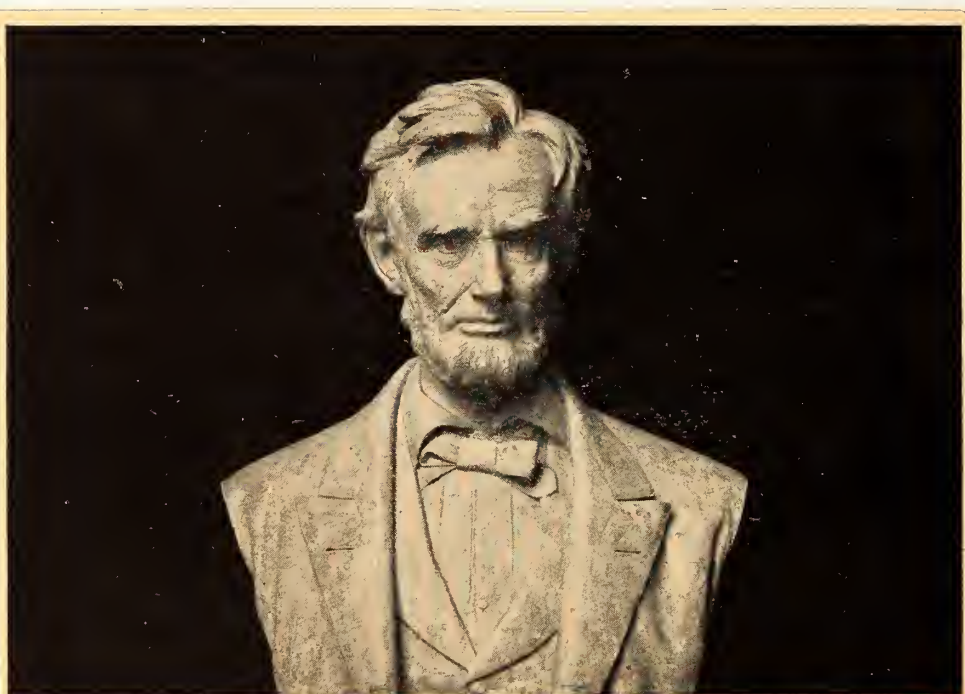
Johannes Sophus Gelert

Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

Gelert John

Lincoln



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**ABRAHAM LINCOLN**

Bust by Gelert, modeled from the Life Mask by Volk

Johannes Sophus Gelert



From the National Cyclopedia of  
American Biography



JOHANNES SOPHUS GELERT, sculptor, was born in Nybøl, Schleswig, Denmark, Dec. 10, 1852, son of Ludwig Christian Frederik and Constance A. F. (Pedersen) Gelert.

He inherited an artistic aptitude from his parents, and in his boyhood made drawings and clay models of animals without instruction.

In 1866, when the family removed to Copenhagen, he was apprenticed to a wood carver, and during 1870-75 was a student at the Danish Royal Academy of Fine Arts while working at his trade. He then lived for two years in Stockholm, Sweden, where he executed several pieces of statuary in marble for Prof. F. Kjeldberg.

A tour through Germany followed in 1877, with intervals spent in Berlin, Dresden and Munich, and afterward he resided in Paris for fifteen months. French sculpture as shown in the salon impressed him unfavorably by its minute realism and lack of taste, and in search of an original conception for a salon exhibit he turned to Thorwaldsen's lofty idealism for inspiration. The result was a colossal group.

representing the Norse god, Thor, combating a bull, which was exhibited in the Salon of 1878.

In 1879-82 Mr. Gelert was in Berlin, working for Prof. Siemering on large monumental works. He then returned to Copenhagen to execute a number of decorative statues for a new theatre there, and upon their completion was awarded a scholarship by the Danish government, which enabled him to go to Rome and continue his studies for some months in ancient and modern sculpture. While in Rome, he executed a bust of an Italian girl, "Adelaide," which he later finished carving in Carrara marble.

Subsequently he lived in Copenhagen and pursued his art for a scanty substance until 1887, when he emigrated to the United States in search of a larger field for sculptural work. He settled in Chicago, where his talents were soon utilized in public edifices and attained great development. His prominent works in that city include the Haymarket monument commemorating the heroic deeds of policemen in quelling the anarchist riot of 1886; two large friezes, representing La Salle's triumphant march through Illinois in 1681 and the Fort Dearborn massacre of 1812, for McVicker's Theatre; another historical bas-relief for the Chicago "Herald" building's facade, showing a medieval herald and three tympana as sym-



bolizing the history of printing; and the statue of Hans Christian Andersen and the heroic bust of Beethoven in Lincoln Park. For the Columbian Exposition, or World's Fair, held in that city in 1893, he produced a colossal group of laborers, "The Struggle for Work," which created a marked sensation as one of the strongest conceptions ever wrought into sculpture and as standing alone in the whole field of the world's statuary, revealing, in the words of the Chicago "Inter-Ocean," "the truest touch, perhaps in all the exposition, of that divine, stern and heroic symbolism of which sculpture is capable." He served also on the exposition's international jury of awards.

Mr. Gelert was the sculptor of the statue raised to Gen. U. S. Grant at his birthplace, Galena, Ill., also of a finely modelled figure, called the "Ascension of the Soul," and of an athletic nude conception of a wounded American soldier, the latter receiving a gold medal at the Nashville Centennial Exposition of 1897.

The sculptor removed to New York city in 1898, and occupied a studio on East 14th Street for twenty-five years. His "Little Architect," a life-size figure study of two children, executed when he was in Rome, was awarded a gold medal by the Art Club of Philadelphia in 1899, and as an exhibit at the Paris exposition in 1900 received honorable mention. His work shown at the Buffalo Pan-American Exposition

of 1901 attained similar recognition, and in 1902 the American Art Society of Philadelphia awarded him its gold medal for his bronze statuette "Theseus."

Gelert's New York studio work included a marble bust of Joseph Medill, editor of the Chicago "Tribune" (1900); "Gothic Art," for the Fine Arts building, and a statue of Napoleon for the Missouri state building, at the St. Louis exposition (1904); "The Turtle Players," a life-size study of the sculptor's two sons as small children (1904); a symbolic statue, "Denmark," expressive of the old Nordic, Viking spirit, at the New York Custom House (1905); "Boy With Vine Bag," designed for a fountain (1906); statues of Francis Furman for Furman Hall, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn., and for the Furman mausoleum in Mount Olivet Cemetery (1908); four figures representing the four seasons for the Althorpe building, New York city (1908); a series of four statues symbolical of Roman civilization, respectively designated "Emperor," "Statesman," "Lawgiver," and "Orator," for the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences (1909); statue of Col. John H. Stevens, first settler and founder of Minneapolis (1910); large bust of Christ, which the sculptor presented to the Saviour's Church (Danish), Brooklyn, N. Y. (1910); "Enlightenment," a statue, and a group of other symbolic figures, for the dome of the Hacken-

sack (N. J.) courthouse (1911); "Evening Prayers," a family statuary group (1913), which is executed in Carrara marble and used as the central motif of the Reredos in Christ Lutheran Church, Maplewood, N. J.; bas-relief of head of Christ (1915); "Christ Blessing Children," also a group where he used his own daughter as the model for one of the children; and a statue of C. W. Post, of "Postum" fame, at Battle Creek, Mich.

Among the numerous portrait busts he modelled in bronze or marble were those of William Frederick Poole, the Chicago Librarian, Orrington Lunt, Northwestern University, Chicago; Robert Collyer, Unity Church, Chicago; H. H. Bancroft, the historian; Jacob Riis, New York settlement pioneer; Judge Joseph Meade Bailey of Chicago; James Dole, vice-president, Chicago Art Institute; and John W. Root, architect, Chicago Art Institute. The most inspiring of his portrait-busts was one he modelled of Abraham Lincoln, replicas of which are in New Jersey schools at South Orange, Roselle, Irvington and Hackensack, in the Presbyterian church in East Orange and in the Lincoln National Bank and Trust Co., Fort Wayne, Ind. Gelert's other work included a portrait medallion of Woodrow Wilson; two bas-reliefs in All Souls Church, New York city, one representing John Harsen Rhodes and the other the Rev.

Thomas R. Slicer; and much decorative church interior work.

An inspired and painstaking sculptor of the old school, Gelert was wholly out of sympathy with modernism in art. He had the attachment of his school for fidelity to detail and gratified both his esthetic sense and love of accuracy in studying the hang of clothes or draperies of his figures. He sought both beauty and resemblance to nature in first moulding his figures anatomically to obtain the natural physical shape before clothing them, and alike in his portrait and symbolic subjects brought life into the expression of the eyes. He had long been a member of the National Sculpture Society and the Architectural League.

Mr. Gelert was married in Chicago, Oct. 28, 1896, to Georgine Betsy, daughter of Gustav Ludvig Sundberg, of Copenhagen, Denmark, and had three children, Carl Robert, Alfred Christian and Elsie Ingeborg Gelert.

Mr. Gelert died in Brooklyn, N. Y., November 5, 1923.

C  
O  
P  
Y

April 24, 1924.

My dear Mrs. Clark:

Mrs. Galert called today, and showed me the photograph of the John S. Galert bust of Lincoln, replica of which is proposed to be purchased for the High School.

I was very much impressed with what seems to me to be one of the best likenesses of Lincoln which I have ever seen. Every expression has been so well studied and worked out by the author, who evidently absorbed everything obtainable on Lincoln to make the atmosphere necessary for such a work.

If Lincoln has so inspired the artist to mould his work so well, then it must follow that the students of any school would be impressed by such a splendid visual portrayal of a character who has done so much for humanity.

I want to add a little herewith to my previous contribution.

Yours truly,

(signed) S. G. Memory

Encl.

To: Mrs. C. N. Clark  
212 Academy Street  
South Orange, N.J.



C  
O  
P  
Y

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
of  
SOUTH ORANGE AND MAPLEWOOD  
THE HIGH SCHOOL

OFFICE OF PRINCIPAL

SOUTH ORANGE, N.J.  
March 23, 1926

Dear Mrs. Gelert,

I think you will be much interested to know how much pleased we are with Mr. Gelert's bust of Lincoln. We consider this conception of Lincoln as remarkably human. Nearly everyone who sees it remarks about the life-like appearance of the eyes and the wonderful expression of the face. We consider this bust the finest piece of work in sculpture that we have in the school.

If you are in South Orange I shall be pleased to have you come in to see us.

Very cordially yours,

(signed)

John H. Bosshart, Principal

The biography of JOHN S. GELERT appears in the following:

- The National Cyclopedia of American Biography . . . . . Vol.9, pp.56
- The International Encyclopedia . . . . . n. Vol.9, pp.54
- The Encyclopedia Americana . . . . . Vol.12, pp.361
- Who's Who in America . . . . . Prior to 1924
- The Architectural Record . . . . . April 1913
- Scannell's New Jersey First Citizens & State Guide . . 1919-20, pp.184
- New Standard Encyclopedia . . . . . Vol.13, pp.401

3119 West 82 Street.  
Cleveland, Ohio.

Aug 14, 1942

Lincoln Life Insurance Co.  
St Wayne, Indiana.

Gentlemen,

I have been informed that you have one of the finest collections of Lincolnia, therefore I take liberty to offer you a fine bust of Lincoln executed by my late husband, John Gelert internationally known sculptor. The late famous architect Cass Gilbert considered the bust the finest made.

You will be able to see a copy of same in the Lincoln National Bank in your city, and if you should be interested, I will be glad to supply you with one.

Very truly yours  
Georgine Gelert.  
(Mrs John Gelert.)



August 19, 1942

Mrs. John Gelert  
3119 West 82nd St.  
Cleveland, Ohio

My dear Madam:

Thank you very much for calling to our attention the bust by your husband, John Gelert, but inasmuch as we already have one of these busts in our collection we would not care to acquire another copy.

Very truly yours,

LAW:EB

Director



ROBERT A. GELERT

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9031 Bourbon Street  
Orange, California 92665  
Phone: 714 / 998-8098

30 April 1979

Mr. Carl A. Gunkler, President  
LINCOLN NATIONAL BANK AND TRUST CO.  
116 E. Berry St.  
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46802

Re: Lincoln Bust

Dear Mr. Gunkler:

In my files I have a letter from your bank from President, at that time, Mr. Charles H. Buesching. The letter is dated July 18, 1946 and addressed to my grandmother, the late Mrs. Georgine Gelert, of Cleveland, Ohio.

The letter is in relation to several pieces of correspondence between Mrs. Gelert and Mr. Buesching in discussion of finalizing the arrangements for the bronze casting of the bust of Abraham Lincoln, which, as I understand it, was accomplished sometime in the fall of 1946 by a Mr. Berchem of Oak Park, Illinois and subsequently placed for permanent display somewhere within the confines of your corporate offices.

My reason for writing is that I am the grandson of the sculptor who executed that Lincoln bust in 1894, Johannes Sophus Gelert, the internationally famed sculptor from Denmark.

I am currently compiling comprehensive information on his life and works and through research have uncovered the location of this Lincoln bust, one of the three known replicas from the original which I possess.

You may well point with pride to this statue that you now possess, not only because it is by one of the world's most honored and recognized sculptors, but also because it is reputed to be the the finest example of Lincolnian sculpture in existence or ever executed.

I would be very grateful to you for your assistance in some information about your statue to complete my studies and file on this particular piece.

Does that bust still have a location in the bank?

What is the general reaction from your customers, and others who view this piece?

30 April 1979

Page Two

MR. Carl A. Gunkler, President

Has the Lincoln bust had a significant promotional value to your bank?

Was the bust cast in bronze by Mr. Berchem of Oak Park, Ill.?

What was the actual cost to your bank of this finished bust?

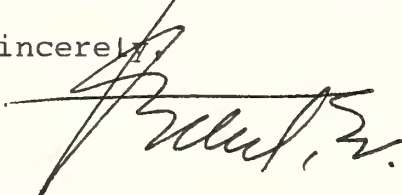
Do you have any record of the location of the plaster bust, from which your bronze casting was made?

If your correspondence files are active back to 1946, I would appreciate photo-copies of your correspondence relating to this subject between Mrs. G. Gelert and/or Mr. Berchem.

If Mr. Berchem's or Mr. Buesching's current address is known, it, too, would be appreciated.

I am most appreciative of your cooperation and assistance on this matter. In exchange for the above-mentioned answers to my inquiry to you, I would be more than glad to furnish you with quite an extensive profile on Johannes Gelert himself, as well as his works throughout the world that culminated in many gold medals and other honors. I'm sure this would enhance your marketing and promotional position with the many clientele and customers who pass through your doors each day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "R. A. Gelert, Sr.", written over a horizontal line.

Robert A. Gelert, Sr.

rag:b

*pending*

# LINCOLN NATIONAL BANK AND TRUST COMPANY

CARL A. GUNKLER  
PRESIDENT AND  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

May 2, 1979

116 EAST BERRY STREET  
FORT WAYNE, INDIANA  
46802

Dr. Mark Neely  
Curator  
Lincoln National Life  
Insurance Company Museum  
1300 Clinton Street  
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801

Dear Dr. Neely:

As we discussed on the phone, enclosed is a letter that I received from Mr. Robert A. Gelert. I have written him and told him that I will forward this letter to you. Thanks for the help.

Sincerely,

*Carl A. Gunkler*

Carl A. Gunkler

CAG/cmp

Enclosure

ROBERT A. GELERT

*file pending*  
9031 Bourbon Street,  
Orange, California 92665  
Phone: 714 / 998-8098  
*Letter A*

9 May 1979

Dr. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Curator  
LINCOLN NATIONAL LIFE INSURANCE MUSEUM  
1300 S. Clinton St.  
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801

Dear Dr. Neely:

I have just received a response letter from Mr. Carl A. Gunkler, President, Lincoln National Bank and Trust Co. regarding the bust of Abraham Lincoln. He mentioned that a copy of my correspondence would be forwarded on to you, and, hopefully, you have that letter by this time.

Inasmuch as your company now has the bust of Lincoln, I would appreciate your comments, as set forth in my letter to Mr. Gunkler, and anything else you would like to add regarding this piece of sculpture.

Is the piece on display at your museum?

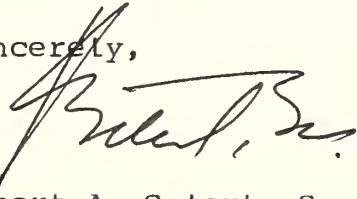
If you have an available photograph of the bust, preferably on its pedestal, I would appreciate a copy of this.

Has this bust been of promotional value to your company in its advertising and promotion?

Do you think that your company would be interested in additional bronze castings from my original to be used in the many branch facilities of Lincoln National Life Insurance? This could be arranged on a limited edition basis.

I look forward to your reply and comments at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Gelert, Sr.

rag:b



file Gelert  
H. H. H. H. H.

May 10, 1979

Mr. Robert A. Gelert, Sr.  
9031 Bourbon Street  
Orange, California 92665

Dear Mr. Gelert:

Mr. Gunkler has referred your letter to me, as he suspects that the Lincoln National Bank donated the bust in question to this collection of Lincolniana. Unfortunately, our records do not reveal the sculptor of the bust (on the viewer's left in the enclosed picture). If that is the bust you seek, then we have it, but we received none of the Bank's records on its acquisition.

We cannot help you, I'm afraid, but you surely can help us. We would appreciate biographical information on the sculptor as well as information on the date and circumstances of his making the Lincoln bust.

If you wish to have a photograph of the bust, we would be happy to supply one.

Yours truly,

Mark E. Neely, Jr.

MEN/jaf

cc: Carl Gunkler, Pres.  
Lincoln Natl Bank  
& Trust Co.

ROBERT A. GELERT

9031 Bourbon Street,  
Orange, California 92665  
Phone: 714 / 998-8098

18 May 1979

Mr. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Director  
THE LOUIS A. WARREN LINCOLN LIBRARY AND MUSEUM  
1300 So. Clinton St.  
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801

Dear Mr. Neely:

I enjoyed our telephone conversation this afternoon relative to the various Lincolnian busts in your museum collection.

I also can say, with the utmost certainty, that the Lincoln bust portrayed in the Xerox copy submitted to me, is definitely not the one by Johannes Gelert. Enclosed, with this letter, are three Xerox photo-copies of the Gelert interpretation taken from photographs of the plaster bust when it was executed in 1894. So in viewing these plates, please bear in mind the age of photographs and the fact that a lot is lost in Xerox reproductions.

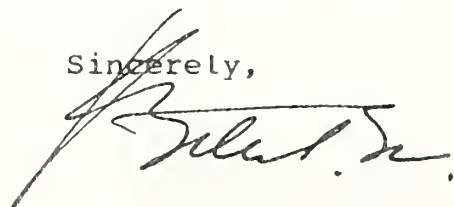
Unfortunately, these photos do not do justice to one of the most praised qualities of this work: the extreme life-like appearance, particularly of the eyes and their expression .....to the point of being eerie. The bust has been noted to be the "most intellectual" of all studies, and has been reputed by many to be the finest piece of Lincolnian sculpture ever executed.

Dimensions of this bust are: 31" high; 22½" broad; 8"x12" base. The portrait is lifesize, signed: "Gelert" '94 (1894) on right shoulder.

I will forward the biographical and credits data next week to you; but I knew you would be interested in immediately using these photos for your review of sculpture inventory in the attempt to locate this bust.

I look forward to receiving further information on your museum and photos of your Lincolnia collection.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Gelert, Sr.

rag:b



THE LOUIS A. WARREN  
LINCOLN LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

1300 SOUTH CLINTON STREET / FORT WAYNE, INDIANA 46801

MARK E. NEELY, JR.  
Director

Telephone (219) 424-5421

May 23, 1979

Mr. Robert A. Gelert, Sr.  
9031 Bourbon Street, Suite A  
Orange, California 92665

Dear Mr. Gelert:

I am certain now that we do not own the bust in question.  
You will have to continue to pursue it with Mr. Gunkler.

You mentioned selling us a modern copy of the bust. What  
price do you have in mind?

Yours truly,

*Mark E. Neely Jr.*  
Mark E. Neely, Jr.

MEN/jaf



ROBERT A. GELERT

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9031 Bourbon Street  
Orange, California 92665  
Phone: 714 / 998-8098

25 June 1979

Mr. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Director  
THE LOUIS A. WARREN LINCOLN LIBRARY AND MUSEUM  
1300 South Clinton St.  
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801

Dear Mr. Neely:

Thank you for your letter of June 18th and copies of the prior correspondence relating to the Gelert Lincoln Bust.

My delay in getting back to you with the quotation has been, by and large, due to technical difficulties with my photo-processing source; and so in lieu of sending you what I would call less than excellent enlargements in black and white, I am enclosing some smaller photos in color of the bronzed plaster, which, I feel, have some benefits of their own.

Yes, I am aware of the 1942 correspondence which you had forwarded; in fact, I have the original letters of correspondence in my files, all except the letter from Mrs. Georgine Gelert, my grandmother (deceased: 1959) to you on August 14, 1942.

You will notice several enclosures with this letter. To identify each in contents, they are:

ENCLOSURES:

1. A Xerox copy of a brief biography published by the NATIONAL CYCLOPAEDIA OF AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY about Johannes Gelert before the turn of the century.
2. A Xerox copy from the ARCHITECTURAL RECORD, April 1913 bringing you more up-to-date on his works to that time, and also showing a few of his works executed after 1900. (His works totaled at least 400 that I know of and have records for from his personal notebooks.)
3. A recap on Johannes Gelert's Academic honors and his major exhibitions and culminating awards and medals.
4. A few of the general commentaries on Johannes Gelert's expertise in the field of sculpture from leading authorities around the world.....extracted from various newspapers around this country.



25 June 1979

Mr. Mark E. Neely, Jr.

Page Two

5. Encl. A & B. A black and white photo print from a magazine depicting "Struggle For Work", a life-size colossal group in plaster executed in Chicago, 1892, two years prior his Lincoln bust execution. I, along with others, feel that this piece of sculpture and his Lincoln bust are two of his finest, and certainly two of the leading pieces in the world. The commentaries in enclosure 5B speak for themselves.
6. A listing of biographical references on Johannes Gelert. There are more that I have uncovered since that compilation, but this listing should give you a fairly good array for his credentials and qualifications.
7. Three colored photos of the bronzed Lincoln bust in different aspects and views. This is the bronzed plaster original from which your bronze casting would be made.
8. Three colored photos in close-up of the same bronzed original showing more detail of the face and eyes. You will notice that I have chosen a medium brown-bronze finish with a greenish-grey patina for this; however your casting would be finished in any shade and patina as desired.

I really must apologize for the colored photos as mentioned in enclosures 7 & 8. I took these shots and matted the photos. My lighting and color was completely off inasmuch as I used the incorrect floodlamps and filters on this. You will also notice a slight distortion to the far right-hand close-up. It was shot with a 55 mm lens accounting for this. The Center close-up and the two oblique left and right full sized views: (#61879-23,24, and 22), were all shot with a 135 mm telephoto lens thereby giving a more accurate portrayal of proportions. In spite of my photography, I hope that these photographs are satisfactory for your critical evaluation on the merit of the subject sculpture.

This letter shall act as a firm quotation to you for a period of no later than thirty days for one full-sized solid bronze investment casting (Lost wax process), of the Johannes Gelert Lincoln bust as depicted in photos, executed by Johannes Gelert in Chicago during 1894 in plaster.

FINISHED BRONZE CASTING:

Material:	Silicon Statuary Bronze
Wall Thickness:	Approx. 3/16" to 1/4"
Weight:	Approx. 150# Net.
Height:	Approx. 30" High
Max. Width:	Approx. 21"

25 June 1979

Mr. Mark E. Neely, Jr.

Page Three

FINISHED BRONZE CASTING: (Cont'd.)

Base Dimensions:	Approx. 8" x 11½"
Mounting Provisions:	Screw inserts or bolt studs to be included as specified if required.
Finish:	As desired and to match color sample or specification by customer. Patina same if required.
Pedestal:	Not included this quotation.

PACKAGING:

Finished bust shall be custom-crated for export shipment and forwarding. Crate shall measure approximately 35" x 27" x 18". Framing shall be 1" x 4"; Bottom strut to be of 2" x 12". Exterior to be of 5/16" plywood sheet. Forklift provision: 2" x 4" skids on underside. Bust shall be fully shock-insulated and protected with a surrounding of "Pellispan" foam pellets or equal.

Gross weight of bust and crating: Approximately 200#.

INSURANCE & FORWARDING:

Bust shall be airfreight forwarded and delivered to the Lincoln Museum loading dock. Bust shall be fully insured for \$15,000 to its destination.

PRICE:

Price for one investment casting, fully finished, patined and ready for display and/or mounting on pedestal: \$12,500. Price to include all shipping, crating, and insurance, FOB Lincoln Museum, Fort Wayne.

CONDITIONS & TERMS:

Fifty percent (50%) purchase price with corporate purchase order; balance of fifty percent (50%) upon delivery to the Lincoln Museum and their sight approval.

WAX PROOFS:

Photos of the wax casting proof shall be forwarded approximately thirty days after receipt of your purchase order.

25 June 1979

Mr. Mark E. Neely, Jr.

Page Four

DELIVERY:

Shipment of finished bust shall be approximately 14 to 16 weeks from receipt of purchase order. Delivery to be in one day from Santa Ana, California to Fort Wayne via commercial airfreight forwarder. Accelerated delivery schedule is possible and will be so notified.

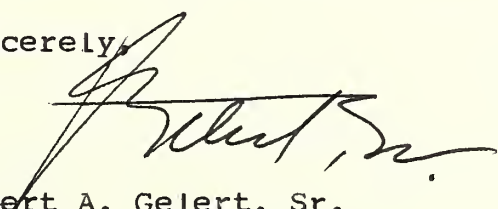
STIPULATIONS:

This Lincoln bust is offered for sale under the condition that it may not be physically duplicated, nor reproduced in any form by your organization and/or its assigns, nor by other party(ies) in the event of a subsequent transfer in ownership to such third party(ies), except with the expressed approval from Robert A. Gelert, Sr. and in writing.

I hope that I have answered most of the questions relating to this fine piece of sculpture that you may have; and I have attempted to anticipate the most of these.

I look forward to your purchase order at the earliest convenience in order to accomodate a very busy foundry schedule in Los Angeles, and to begin a mutually equitable business relationship with your organization.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Gelert, Sr.

rag:b  
encl

J O H A N N E S   S O P H U S   G E L E R T

(1852-1923)

ENCLOSURE( / )

ACADEMIC HONORS

1866-69	TEKNOLOGISK INSTITUT Apprenticed to Woodcarver under Prof. C.A. Berg	COPENHAGEN
1870-75	ROYAL DANISH ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS - Sculpture Major Graduated with the highest honors. Recipient of coveted: MEDAL OF THE ACADEMY	COPENHAGEN
	<u>Post Graduate Studies:</u>	
1876-77	Under Professor F. KJELDBERG	STOCKHOLM
1877-79	Under various Professors	PARIS
1879-81	Under Professor Rudolf SIEMERING	BERLIN
	Under Professor Albert WOLFF	MUNICH
	Under Professor F. HARTZER	DRESDEN
1882-85	SCHOLARSHIP: C.A. ANCKER FOUNDATION Awarded by Ministry of Education, ROYAL DANISH GOVERNMENT, for advanced studies in ancient and classical sculpture.	ROME

EXHIBITIONS & AWARDS

1875-87	CHARLOTTENBORG CASTLE EXHIBITION		COPENHAGEN
1878	INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION SALON	<u>Honorable Mention</u>	PARIS
1893	COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION & WORLD'S FAIR Appointed as Judge: International Jury of Awards	<u>Gold Medal &amp;</u> <u>"Court of Honor"</u>	CHICAGO
1897	NASHVILLE CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION	<u>Gold Medal</u>	NASHVILLE
1899	ART CLUB OF PHILADELPHIA EXHIBITION	<u>Gold Medal</u>	PHILADELPHIA
1900	INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION SALON	<u>Honorable Mention</u>	PARIS
1901	PAN-AMERICAN EXPOSITION	<u>Honorable Mention</u>	BUFFALO
1902	AMERICAN ART SOCIETY	<u>Gold Medal</u>	PHILADELPHIA
1904	LOUISIANA PURCHASE EXPOSITION	<u>Special Commissions</u>	ST. LOUIS
1912	THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN		NEW YORK
1913	PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY OF THE FINE ARTS		PHILADELPHIA
1914	CHARLOTTENBORG CASTLE EXHIBITION		COPENHAGEN
1915	PANAMA-PACIFIC EXPOSITION		SAN FRANCISCO

NATIONAL SCULPTURE SOCIETY  
ARCHITECTURAL LEAGUE OF NEW YORK  
MUNICIPAL ART SOCIETY OF NEW YORK



COMMENTARIES

"The ablest sculptor we have ever had, and whose valued works of art have already brought to him a degree of renown not confined to our own country. He is possessed of conceded pre-eminence and ability."

—— THOMAS B. BRYAN, Vice President  
Columbian Exposition & World's Fair  
Chicago- 1893

".....Classed among the world's sculptors of merit."

—— MAPLEWOOD RECORD  
December 29, 1922

"As excellent as the work (of Johannes Gelert) is, both in design and in execution, it embodies the ideals and the approved technique of a previous generation. —— It is romantic in subject matter and realistic in handling —— works of superior excellence."

HENRY TURNER BAILEY, Director  
The Cleveland School of Art- 1930

"Mr. Gelert is one of the leading sculptors of the country."

—— NASHVILLE BANNER  
July 10, 1908

"No other Chicago sculptor has yet approached Mr. Gelert in the modeling of a male figure. His manipulation is strictly classical, truthful, and powerful. His work, even in plaster, which the great Danish sculptor, Thorwaldsen, said 'IS THE DEATH', ....is replete with life."

—— CHICAGO TIMES-HERALD  
March 1, 1896

".....A sculptor of international reputation, a man who has left the abiding record of his superior craftsmanship on some of the more notable of the public buildings which have gone up in this part of the country in recent years, and also has executed public memorials and other works of art which have found an honored place in Europe as well as in America."

"Here was a man who won plaudits of the world in his time and moved from land to land like a conquering hero."

—— THE SUNDAY CALL, Newark  
October 22, 1911

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(Robert A. Gelert, Oct. 17, 1979, 3)

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## JOHANNES GELERT, SCULPTOR.

BY ADA BROWN TALBOT.

Genius in art is a distinctively inherited quality; it must live in the veins of him who gives to the world art in any of its phases, whether it be music, poetry or creations in marble or paint. For genera-



BEETHOVEN—BY JOHANNES GELERT.

LINCOLN PARK, CHICAGO

tions art in its various mediums has been the life work of many of Mr. Gelert's ancestors, both paternal and maternal. It is, therefore, an easy matter to trace the origin of the artistic qualities and talents

which have made him the most notable member of his family.

Johannes Gelert is a Dane, born at Nybel Moor. His father, at one time court jeweller to Dom Pedro of Brazil, owned a large brickyard during the sculptor's early boyhood, and it was in these years that the embryo artist asserted itself in the little Johannes, whose greatest delight was to visit the brickyard and model the clay into semblances of the "human form divine." But, as the years passed, the boy no longer cared for his mud dolls. The restlessness of youth filled him with an eager desire for travel and adventure, and, coming of old viking stock, he longed for the sea and the exciting life of a sailor. However, fortunately for him, he was disappointed in this mistaken ambition, and was apprenticed to a wood-carver. His boyish dreams of conquest and adventure upon the sea were slowly but surely dissolved in the calmer, cooler judgment of the growing man. His talent for art again predominated, and this time permanently shaped his destiny.

Faithfully the young apprentice worked until he had mastered the wood carver's craft, meanwhile attending a night school in preparation for entering the Royal Academy at Copenhagen, an institution over four hundred years old, and one of the most noted in the world. Five years were spent here, during which time he won the highest honors in the school. His poetic temperament manifested itself in his various interpretations of Danish mythology and in many strikingly original



HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN—BY JOHANNES GELERT.

LINCOLN PARK, CHICAGO



conceptions displaying marvelous versatility.

Upon his graduation from the Royal Academy in 1875, Gelert was further honored by being sent by the government to Italy to complete his studies, in recognition of his rapid advancement and adaptability to general art work. However, before this time he had spent a year in Paris and three years in Berlin, under famous masters. In the latter city he made sketches under Semmerring for the Washington monument in Philadelphia. Considerable of the bas-relief work on the base of this monument was made by Mr. Gelert.

On May 4, 1886, the whole country was shocked by the terrible Haymarket



THE LITTLE ARCHITECTS—BY JOHANNES GELERT.



VISION OF THE SOUL—BY JOHANNES GELERT.

disaster in Chicago, when sixty-seven brave policemen were killed or wounded by the bursting of a bomb in the crowded square—the vicious and unwarranted work of anarchist rioters. It was decided by the people of Chicago to erect a monument on this square to the memory of the valiant bluecoats who gave their lives in defense of the public welfare, and to Mr. Gelert was awarded the commission to create a fitting tribute. The result is a magnificent statue in bronze of a policeman, who, with uplifted hand and bearing full of dignity and force, commands peace. This was Mr. Gelert's first commission in Chicago, and to the favorable impression it caused may be attributed much of his later successes in the West.

Too much cannot be said in praise of the splendid statue of Grant, the gift of Mr. Kohlsaat, of Chicago, to the citizens of Galena, Ill., the home of the great hero. It is undoubtedly one of Mr. Gelert's best works, for in it lies a latent strength and heroism combined with the quiet, unassuming manner of a man amongst men, who was wise, brave and generous, and whose qualities the sculptor has graven with wonderful fidelity. The statue represents the hero as a citizen, dressed quietly and standing in an easy attitude, with one hand thrust in his trousers pocket, a detail which caused Mrs. Grant to exclaim, when examining the model submitted to her, "See there! That'll never do! It'll never do at all! I used to tell



WILLIAM FREDERICK POOLE, LIBRARIAN, CHICAGO  
LIBRARY--BY JOHANNES GELERT.



WOUNDED SOLDIER--BY JOHANNES GELERT.

my husband twenty times a day to take his hands out of his pockets!"

In the pedestal is a bas-relief portraying the meeting of Grant and Lee at Appomattox—a remarkable piece of work for its strength and realism. Indeed, it thrills one always to look upon this stirring scene, a scene from the tragedy of the civil war, at once full of pathos, humiliation and defeat on the one side, and victory with its attendant emotions on the other.

One of Mr. Gelert's most artistic successes is the group entitled "The Struggle for Work," which was exhibited at the World's Fair and called forth praises from friends and strangers alike. Mr. Gelert has received letters from all parts



of the world from persons who saw this beautiful piece of work at the Fair, telling him of the profound impression it created upon them. Of it the Chicago Times said, on July 3, 1893: "Among the groups one of the most noticeable is Johannes Gelert's 'Struggle for Work.' In the first place, no other contains an equal number of figures, and, after all, it should be remembered that, however beautiful the single figure may be, the group remains the test of a sculptor's powers. In the second place, it is a bold and ambitious treatment of a distinctively modern idea. There is a custom in certain English manufacturing towns of flinging tickets from the windows when more hands are needed. These tickets, or checks, are eagerly fought for. When presented at the business office of the house issuing them they secure a position for the holder. In Mr. Gelert's group the holder is a stalwart man, who lifts his prize high above his head, the while he listens half pityingly to the pleadings of an old man. Meantime a youth, unobserved, is reaching for it; a little boy clings beseechingly to the strong man's knee, and under foot inevitably lies the working woman, hampered with a baby, which she shields in her fall. Certainly no other sculptor has fallen upon of such vital interest, and no other piece of statuary attracts as much attention from visitors."

There has been erected in Chicago a bronze statue of the Danish poet and storyteller, Hans Christian Andersen—the work of Mr. Gelert. The cost of this statue, \$10,000, was contributed almost entirely by the penny savings of little children all over the land. It represents

the rugged, kindly faced old poet seated with pen and paper upon his knee, and by his side a swan, suggestive of his immortalized tale of "The Ugly Duckling," and the pathetic fact that the poet, when writing it, had himself in mind.

For the new Herald building of Chicago, built in 1890, this versatile sculptor produced a mediaeval herald, a graceful figure ten feet six inches in height, and weighing one and a quarter tons, which was placed in a niche high in the face of the front wall, and also three large tympanum reliefs in terra-cotta, representing the history of printing, for the architectural adornment of this same building. McVicker's Theatre, in the same city, possesses some valuable historical work of Mr. Gelert's, in two large reliefs, representing "The Fort Dearborn Massacre" and "La Salle's Triumphant March Through Illinois." Beside the four pieces exhibited at the World's Fair, he also made the statue of "Neptunus" (twelve feet) to crown the rostral columns in the grand court.

In many cities, at home and abroad, may be found this talented sculptor's work, of which I have enumerated but a few. The accompanying illustrations speak for themselves; they are typical examples of Mr. Gelert's work, and cover a broad scope in subjects and treatment. In his composition we find the same traits always prevailing, and these are the best that exist in any work—feeling, sympathy, refinement and ideality, combined with force and a refreshing deviation from old lines, which together have brought Mr. Gelert's work to the highest plane of perfection in art.



EMBLEMATIC NORSE FIGURE FOR  
THE NEW YORK CUSTOMS HOUSE.  
JOHANNES S. GELERT, SCULPTOR.  
CASS GILBERT, ARCHITECT.

"DENMARK"





THE EMPEROR AUGUSTUS AND THE  
ORATOR CICERO, FOR THE BROOKLYN  
INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES.  
JOHANNES S. GELERT, SCULPTOR.  
McKIM, MEAD AND WHITE, ARCHITECTS.





ENCLOSURE( / )

A  
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH  
OF  
JOHANNES SOPHUS GELERT.



*From The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography.*

JAMES T. WHITE & COMPANY, PUBLISHERS,  
New York.  
1899.



*J. H. Kent*

**GELERT, Johannes Sophus**, sculptor, was born in the village of Nybel, Schleswig, Denmark (now part of Prussia), Dec. 10, 1852, son of Ludwig Christian Friedrich and Constance A. F. (Pedersen) Gelert. Both his parents possessed artistic ability; his father was at one time court jeweler to Dom Pedro, emperor of Brazil, and his mother was a skillful designer of flowers. In his hours of leisure, at school, the son amused himself making drawings and clay images of animals, quite without instruction, and following his own inclination. In 1866, when the family removed to Copenhagen, he was apprenticed to a wood-carver, and in 1870 he entered the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, completing his studies with honor in 1875, all the while working at his trade. In the following summer he located in Stockholm, Sweden, where he executed several pieces of statuary in marble for Prof. F. Kjeldberg. In 1877 he made an extensive tour through Germany, stopping at Berlin, Dresden and Munich, and then spent fifteen months in Paris. Having just completed his studies in Copenhagen he did not feel inclined to enter the *École des Beaux Arts*, having gained a most unfavorable impression of most of the French sculptures shown at the Salon as betraying poor taste, minutely realistic, utterly in contrast to Thorwaldsen's lofty idealism. Accordingly he went to work on some original conceptions. His colossal group, representing the Norse god, Thor, combatting a bull, exhibited at the Salon of 1878, was the result. Although this work received much favorable comment in the French art journals, it found no purchaser, and having spent more than his savings, Mr. Gelert was obliged to return to Copenhagen. In the following year he went to Berlin, where he worked almost three years for Prof. R. Siemering, A. Wolf, F. Hartzer and other contrac-

tors on large monumental works. In 1882 he received a commission for a number of decorative statues for a new theatre in Copenhagen, and having completed them, was awarded a scholarship by the Danish government, such as is given only to advanced artists of recognized ability. He thereupon went to Rome to continue his studies, and while making himself thoroughly acquainted with ancient and modern masterpieces, also attempted some original work, notably a life-size group of two children, called the "Little Architect." At the end of nine months he returned to Copenhagen, where he was kept scantily busy until the spring of 1887, when he concluded to seek a large field for his activity in this country. Accidentally he went to Chicago, and here it was that his talent attained a greater development. Among his first large commissions was the Hay-market monument, commemorating the heroic deeds of the policemen in the anarchistic riot of 1886. For McVicker's Theatre he executed two large friezes, representing La Salle's triumphal march through Illinois (1681), and the Fort Dearborn massacre (1812); for the Chicago "Herald" building the figure of a mediæval herald and three tympana for the façade, representing the history of printing. In the latter works Mr. Gelert shows his strongest style of composition and modeling. The statue of Gen. Grant at Galena, Ill., with historical bas-reliefs representing Lee's surrender at Appomattox; the statue of Hans Christian Andersen, and the heroic bust of Beethoven in Lincoln Park, Chicago, are acknowledged to be among the very best examples of modern statuary. At the Columbian exposition in Chicago, 1893, Gelert's colossal group of laborers, "The Struggle for Work," created a marked sensation. The Springfield, Mass., "Republican" called it: "The most powerful and original work, not only in America

but in the whole exhibition of sculpture," and said : "This strenuous and faithful conception, representing the workingman's struggle for bread . . . is one of the strongest things ever wrought into sculpture, and whether it be called socialistic, anarchistic, or what not else, it deserves recognition for its extraordinary moral quality and significance." The Chicago "Inter-Ocean" said : "In 'The Struggle for Work,' by Johannes Gelert, there is the truest touch, perhaps in all the exposition, of that divine, stern and heroic symbolism, of which sculpture is capable, to which its function is most nearly allied." Close upon the World's fair came the great panic of 1893, and the great exposition, which otherwise might have proven a great incentive in art matters, brought no benefit whatever to local art. During the five following years Mr. Gelert executed his beautiful female figure, entitled the "Ascension of the Soul," and an athletic nude figure of a wounded American soldier, both of which have been highly praised, the latter receiving a gold medal at the Nashville centennial in 1897. In 1898 Mr. Gelert removed to New York city, and opened a studio.







# A DANISH-AMERICAN SCULPTOR



## THE WORK OF JOHANNES S. GELERT

CHARLES HENRY DORR

ONE FEELS the spirit of the Norseland, the courage and resolute will of the north, the songs of the sagas of legendary lore in the majestic figure of the daughter of the Vikings typifying Denmark, which ornaments the United States Custom House, New York, a figure of heroic stature, carved in Tennessee marble by Johannes S. Gelert, and an imposing example of this Danish-American sculptor's art.

There is something more than marble in this robust figure of the Norseland, clad in the mediæval costume of the period, about the year 1000 and clasping a boat hook of the Vikings in her hand. It reflects the indomitable heroism and virile character of the hardy northlanders, this Viking's daughter. It also reveals the sculptor's inclination toward interpreting the Norse mythology, while the lines of beauty suggest the student of Thorwaldsen.

S-o

In his boyhood days, Johannes Gelert, the son of Ludwig Christian Frederick Gelert, Court Jeweler to Emperor Dom Pedro, of Brazil, thought he heard the call of the sea, and went to Copenhagen from his native town of Nybel in Denmark, which is now a province of Prussia. Wandering about the docks of Copenhagen he endeavored to find a berth on board ship, but he did not encounter any captain who encouraged his ambitions to become a sailor.

So he happened to meet a wood carver in the Danish city, who gave him employment, and the young Dane, who wanted to be a sailor became so interested in wood carving and modeling in clay that he forgot the call of the sea and continued the craft of wood-carving for some four years and in his spare time studied art in the Royal Academy at Copenhagen. Thus he began his career in the pursuit of art and while a





EMBLEMATIC NORSE FIGURE FOR  
THE NEW YORK CUSTOMS HOUSE.  
JOHANNES S. GELERT, SCULPTOR.  
CASS GILBERT, ARCHITECT.





CARYATID FIGURE.  
Johannes S. Gelert, Sculptor.

student in Copenhagen he was commissioned to decorate one of the theatres in that city, and executed a series of decorative figures representing the history of music. His first important commission soon followed after receiving medals at the Danish Academy, and he went to Paris, where he exhibited in

the Salon a colossal group in sculpture representing the god Thor of Norse mythology, which attracted much favorable attention.

He was then chosen to execute a series of decorations for the Palace Trocadero in Paris, and afterwards returned to his home city of Copenhagen.

In 1882 he received a scholarship from the Danish Government, and visited Rome, where he continued his study of art and occasionally completed an example of sculpture.

While in Rome he modelled a group of sculpture, which he called "The Little Architect," a work not unlike a tale of Hans Christian Andersen. Here, carved in marble, are two little children at play, and "The Little Architect" is about to transform a mound of sand with his wand into a castle, a fanciful theme, and invested with the spirit of childhood by the sculptor. Later the group was exhibited at the Philadelphia Art Club, where "The Little Architect" received a gold medal, and the Committee on Selection chose the piece of sculpture for representation at the Paris Exposition.

In 1887 Gelert sailed for America and upon his arrival in this country called at the studios of Augustus St. Gaudens and J. Q. A. Ward, but much to his surprise both of these distinguished sculptors were away from town for the summer, something unheard of in Denmark.

Then the Danish artist proceeded to Philadelphia and Boston and finally arrived in Chicago, where, by chance, he met a fellow countryman, who informed him of the proposed Haymarket monument, planned for that city.

Gelert was finally awarded the commission and at the World's Columbian Exposition was not only represented by important examples of his sculpture, but was also appointed a member of the International Jury of Award.

His statue of "Neptune" was exhibited in the Court of Honor, and his dramatic group, "The Struggle for Work," an emotional portrayal of the strife in the field of labor—also met with wide popular approval.

In the semi-classical figure of "Gothic Art," which was carved in Indiana lime-



stone for the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Louis (the building by Cass Gilbert) is an example of beauty and rhythm of line and subtle modelling.

It is a graceful figure, this maiden of Gothic Art, who is clasping in one arm the model of an ancient shrine, presumably enclosing a relic from some far-away clime, and withal revealing a classic note in the art of the sculptor.

This figure ornaments the portals of the Fine Arts Museum in the Missouri metropolis, where it stands symbolical of the art of bygone ages.

Often the arrangement of the drapery enveloping a figure enhances the expression, and, for instance, this effect is revealed in the life-size figure of "Intercession," which was designed for a tomb in Perth Amboy, New Jersey. Although an early commission, it illustrates the sculptor's skill in the modelling of the figure, the expression of appeal, which is accentuated by the folds of the drapery. The figure was designed for Mr. E. V. Ekesen, a fellow countryman of the artist, and is in terra cotta.

Another figure designed for a tomb is the Caryatid, which is executed in light gray granite and mounted on a pedestal, with the inscription "Hope." The figure, which is one of a series of four made for the Furman family, of Nashville, Tennessee, is holding a flower bud in the left hand, symbolical of hope. These Caryatids are supporting a canopy over the sarcophagus.

At the Nashville Centennial Exposition, the South honored the Danish sculptor by awarding him a gold medal for his figure of "A Wounded American Soldier." The model for this soldierly figure was the son of a well-known American General, who participated in the Civil War. It is an extremely effective composition, natural in pose and withal suggests a modern antique.

On the western façade of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, designed by McKim, Mead and White, are four colossal figures typifying Roman civilization, by Johannes Gelert, and comparatively recent examples of his art.



ROMAN ORATOR. FOR THE BROOKLYN INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES.

Johannes S. Gelert, Sculptor.

McKim, Mead and White, Architects.

Here stand the figures of Augustus, a classic type of the Roman period; Justinian in Byzantine costume, and carrying a book of historic days; Julius Caesar, the Roman Statesman, and Cicero, the Roman orator, who stands with scroll in one hand, perchance the manuscript of some famous oration, a souvenir of the intellectual prowess of Roman civilization.

All of these figures were designed by





THE EMPEROR AUGUSTUS AND THE  
ORATOR CICERO, FOR THE BROOKLYN  
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the sculptor to conform to the architecture of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences and to harmonize with the architectural lines of the edifice. The modelling of the figure of Augustus is skillful, and the ornamentation of the cuirass worn by the Roman reveals an original design by the sculptor.

It may be interesting to note here that the late Francis D. Millet, the



"INTERCESSION," FIGURE FOR A MAUSOLEUM.

Johannes S. Gelert, Sculptor.



"GOTHIC ART," AN ALLEGORICAL FIGURE.

Johannes S. Gelert, Sculptor.

American artist, loaned several togas from his collection to the sculptor while he was engaged in modelling the figures of Julius Caesar and Cicero.

"To model in clay is only child's play, but to get a commission is a hard proposition" is the title of a fanciful vignette in the sculptor's studio. It portrays two children who are engaged in modelling the classic head of a goddess of tradition. Alluring is this conceit of the sculptor, which again reveals the versatility of his art, and also illustrates, in a serio-humorous vein, a truth known to almost every artist.



Another series of sketches expressing the joyousness of childhood include several figures of the sculptor's children.

These original studies show a group of children at play in a variety of interesting poses. One of the little figurines in the series was appreciated abroad, for it was secured by the Art Society of Copenhagen.

Among the numerous designs of interest in the sculptor's studio are sketches and studies in preliminary stage appropriate for city parks or municipal buildings. One of these is a model for a colossal dual fountain, symbolical in theme and set in a Roman pergola.

Mounted on his fleet-winged Pegasus, Apollo stands with lute in hand, riding over a huge boulder, and grouped around the rock of Helicon are the figures of the nine muses and the graces. Here may be noted Terpsichore, Melpomene, Cleo and Euterpe attired in flowing Grecian costumes, picturesque figures in this ornamental design for a classic fountain.

A battle between the gods of the Norseland and the monsters of antiquity forms a mythological theme portrayed in a bas-relief, another study noted in the atelier of the sculptor.

"Westward the star of empire takes its way," and in the west the art of Gelert is represented by several notable examples of this Danish sculptor.

In Lincoln Park, Chicago, is Gelert's seated figure of Hans Christian Ander-

sen, a countryman of the artist. The celebrated author of fairy romances being depicted with a tablet and pencil, and near by is the "Ugly Duckling," suggested by one of the Danish writer's creations.

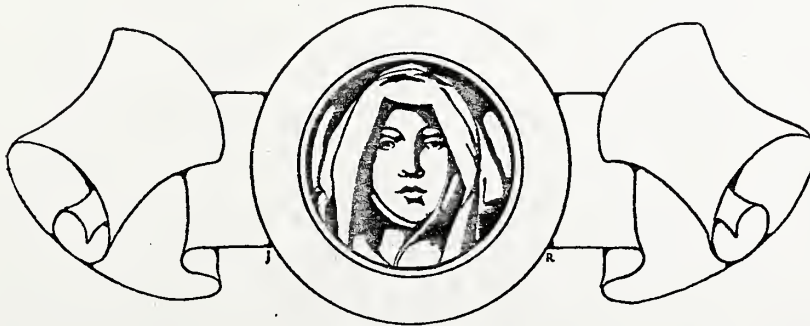
There is a similarity in a way between these two Danes, the author and the sculptor. Judged by a number of his juvenile subjects, his statuettes of children for which he has a penchant. Gelert might be called the Andersen in the realm of sculpture.

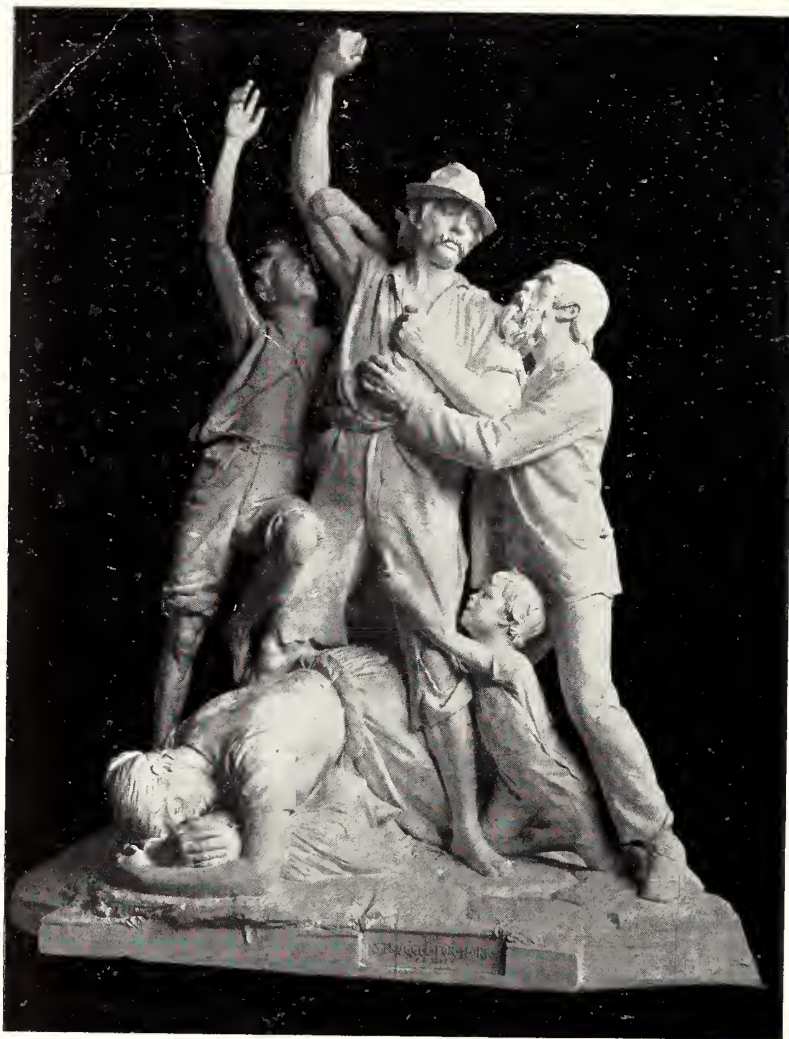
Aside from the Andersen statue, Gelert is also represented in Lincoln Park by a large bust of Beethoven.

Among other examples of the sculptor's work in portraiture is a bust in marble of the distinguished journalist, Joseph Medill, the late editor and publisher of the Chicago Tribune.

Another interesting example of portrait statuary is the heroic figure of General U. S. Grant, which stands in Galena, Illinois, the home of the national hero before and after the Civil War. Veterans of the great conflict between the North and South declare this statue to be a most intimate likeness of the illustrious soldier.

A statuette of a hero of another nationality is of the Greek Theseus, which was awarded a gold medal in Philadelphia. It portrays the Greek hero asking for the hand of Ariadne, and was included in the sculpture exhibit at the recent Winter Academy.





THE STRUGGLE FOR WORK



1866-69	Apprenticed in Wood-Carving	COPENHAGEN
1870-75	ROYAL DANISH ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS Graduated with the highest honors. Recipient of coveted: <i>Medal of the Academy</i>	COPENHAGEN
<u>Post Graduate Studies:</u>		
1876-77	Under Professor F. KJELDBERG	STOCKHOLM
1877-79	Under various Professors	PARIS
1879-81	Under Professor Rudolf SIEMERING Under Professor Albert WOLFF Under Professor F. HARTZER	BERLIN MUNICH DRESDEN
1882-85	Scholarship awarded by ROYAL DANISH GOVERNMENT. Advanced studies in ancient and classical sculpture	ROME

1878	THE SALON	<i>Honorable Mention</i>	PARIS
1893	COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION & WORLD'S FAIR *Withdrawn when appointed as Judge: <i>International Jury of Awards</i>	<i>Gold Medal *</i>	CHICAGO
1897	NASHVILLE CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION	<i>Gold Medal</i>	NASHVILLE
1899	ART CLUB OF PHILADELPHIA EXHIBITION	<i>Gold Medal</i>	PHILADELPHIA
1900	INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION	<i>Honorable Mention</i>	PARIS
1901	PAN-AMERICAN EXPOSITION	<i>Honorable Mention</i>	BUFFALO
1902	AMERICAN ART SOCIETY	<i>Gold Medal</i>	PHILADELPHIA
1904	LOUISIANA PURCHASE EXPOSITION	<i>Special Commissions</i>	ST. LOUIS
1915	PANAMA-PACIFIC EXPOSITION		SAN FRANCISCO

National Sculpture Society  
Architectural League of New York  
Municipal Art Society of New York

"The ablest sculptor we have ever had, and whose valued works of art have already brought to him a degree of renown not confined to our own country. He is possessed of conceded pre-eminence and ability."

—— THOMAS B. BRYAN, Vice President  
Columbian Exposition & World's Fair  
Chicago- 1893

".....Classed among the world's sculptors of merit."

—— MAPLEWOOD RECORD  
December 29, 1922

"As excellent as the work (of Johannes Gelert) is, both in design and in execution, it embodies the ideals and the approved technique of a previous generation. ——It is romantic in subject matter and realistic in handling ——works of superior excellence."

HENRY TURNER BAILEY, Director  
The Cleveland School of Art- 1930

"Mr. Gelert is one of the leading sculptors of the country."

—— NASHVILLE BANNER  
July 10, 1908

"No other Chicago sculptor has yet approached Mr. Gelert in the modeling of a male figure. His manipulation is strictly classical, truthful, and powerful. His work, even in plaster, which the great Danish sculptor, Thorwaldsen, said 'IS THE DEATH', ....is replete with life."

—— CHICAGO TIMES-HERALD  
March 1, 1896

".....A sculptor of international reputation, a man who has left the abiding record of his superior craftsmanship on some of the more notable of the public buildings which have gone up in this part of the country in recent years, and also has executed public memorials and other works of art which have found an honored place in Europe as well as in America."

"Here was a man who won plaudits of the world in his time and moved from land to land like a conquering hero."

—— THE SUNDAY CALL, Newark  
October 22, 1911

"Among the groups, (in exhibition at the World's Fair), one of the most noticeable is Johannes Gelert's *STRUGGLE FOR WORK*. In the first place, no other contains an equal number of figures; and, after all, it should be remembered that, however beautiful the single figure may be, the group remains the test of a sculptor's powers. In the second place, it is a bold and ambitious treatment of a distinctly modern idea. No other piece of statuary attracts as much attention from visitors."

—— CHICAGO TIMES  
July 3, 1893

"In *THE STRUGGLE FOR WORK* by Johannes Gelert, there is the truest touch, perhaps in all the exposition, of that divine, stern, and heroic symbolism, of which its function is most nearly allied."

—— CHICAGO INTER-OCEAN  
July 1893

"This group created a sensation at the World's Fair and would have been awarded the Gold Medal had not Mr. Gelert, himself, been chosen a member of the International Jury of Awards in the Art Department."

—— GALVESTON DAILY NEWS  
July 2, 1896

"The most powerful and original work, not only in America, but in the whole exhibition of sculpture. This strenuous and faithful conception, representing the workingman's struggle for bread is one of the *STRONGEST THINGS EVER WROUGHT INTO SCULPTURE*; and whether it be called socialistic, anarchistic, or what not else, it deserves recognition for its extraordinary moral quality and significance."

—— THE REPUBLICAN  
Springfield, Mass. 1893

COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION & WORLD'S FAIR  
Chicago 1893

*The Gold Medal*

Benezit

*History of American Sculpture*

Lorado Taft, MacMillan Co., New York 1924 & 1930 Rev.

*Modern American Sculpture*

Hartmann, Sadakichi, Ed. 1918

*The National Cyclopedia of American Biography*

James T. White & Co., New York Vol. IX, 1899-1907

*Webster's Biographical Dictionary*

G. & C. Merriam Co., Springfield, Mass. 1966-1976

*New Jersey's First Citizens & State Guide*

J. J. Scannell Publ., Paterson, N.J., Vol. I, 1917-18  
Vol. II, 1919-20

*Who Was Who in America*

A. N. Marquis Co., Vol. I (1897-1942), 1943

*Who's Who in America*

A. N. Marquis Co., Vol. XIII & editions prior to 1924

*Architectural Record*

The Architectural Record Co., New York, April 1913

*Universal Pronouncing Dictionary of Biography & Mythology*

Joseph Thomas, 5th Edition, 1930

*Dictionary of American Painters, Sculptors & Engravers*

Fielding; John Edwards, Publ. 1926-1971

*New Century Cyclopedia of Names*

Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York 1954

*American Biographies*

Harper & Bros., New York-London, 1st Edition, 1940

*The International Encyclopedia*

Vol. IX

*Encyclopedia Americana*

Vol. XII

*New Standard Encyclopedia*

Vol. XIII

*Norden*

The Norden Publ. Co., Racine, Wisc. Vol. I, No. 9, Feb. 1904  
Vol. II, No. 10, Mar. 1905  
Vol. VI, No. 11, Apr. 1909

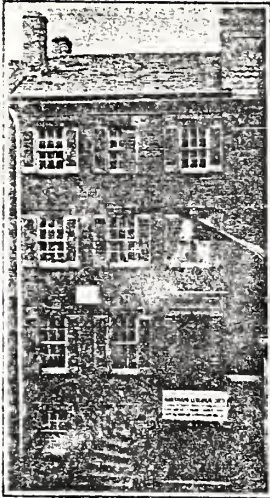
*Sculpture Index*

J. Clapp, Scarecrow Press, Inc., Metuchen, N.J., 1970, Part I

*Thieme-Becker*







The  
HOUSE IN WHICH LINCOLN DIED  
516 Tenth Street, N. W.  
Washington, D. C.

Contains the Oldroyd Lincoln  
Memorial Collection.

O. H. OLDROYD,  
PUBLISHER,  
516 TENTH STREET, N. W.

ENCLOSURE(3)

WASHINGTON, D. C. July 17, 1915.

Mr. Johannes Gebert,  
New York.

Dear Sir:-

I am preparing a life of Lincoln  
in poetry, the best poems, and each one is  
illustrated. Mr. Marion Mills Miller has written  
a poem and would like to have your bust of Lin-  
coln appear at the head of the page.

Will you give me permission to use it,  
and will you send me a photograph, or inform me  
where I can obtain one that I may have a cut  
made for the book. You will see that there will  
be a number of statues in the book. I will place  
the photograph in the collection contained in  
the house in which Lincoln died.

Hoping you can help me out in this matter,  
I remain,

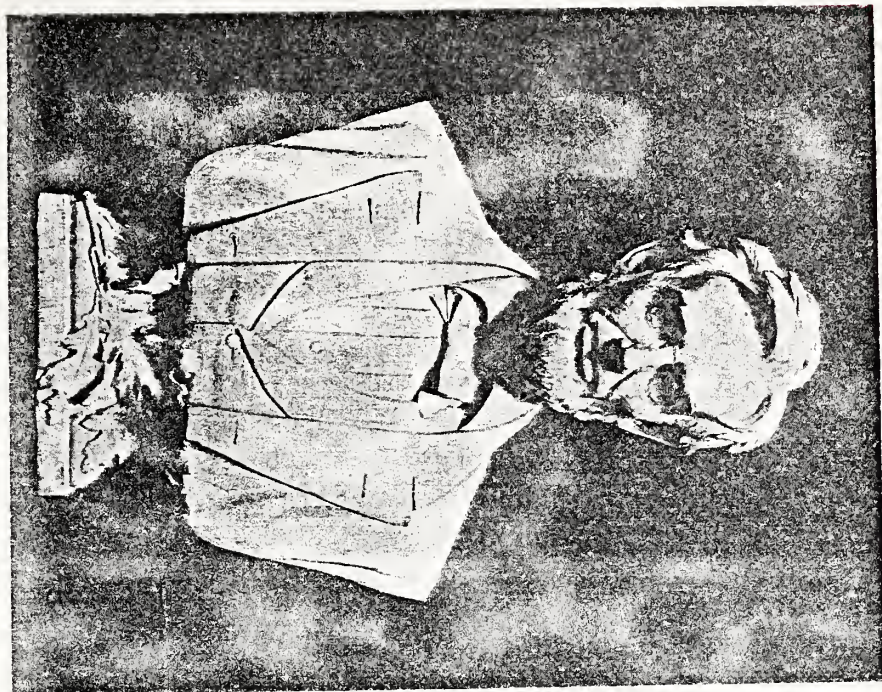
Very truly,

*O. H. Oldroyd.*

*Answered and sent*

*photo July 29 1915*





LINCOLN  
From a bust by Johannes Gelert

## INTRODUCTION

### THE POETIC SPIRIT OF LINCOLN

By MARION MILLS MILLER

(See biographical sketch on page 146)

SOME years ago, while editing Henry C. Whitney's "Life of Lincoln" I showed a photograph of the bust of Lincoln by Johannes Gelert, the most intellectual to my mind of all the studies of his face, to a little Italian shoemaker, and asked him if he knew who it was. The boy, evidently prompted by a recent lesson at school, said questioningly, "Whittier? — Longfellow?" I replied, "No, it is Lincoln, the great President." He answered, "Well, he looks like a poet, anyway."

This verified a conclusion to which I had already come: Lincoln, had he lived in a region of greater culture, such as New England, might not have adopted the engrossing pursuits of law and politics, but, as did Whittier, have remained longer on the farm and gradually taken up the calling of letters, composing verse of much the same order as our Yankee bards, and poetry of even higher merit than some produced.

It is not generally known that Lincoln, shortly before he went to Congress, wrote verse of a kind to compare favorably with the early attempts of American poets such as those named. Thus the two poems of his which have been preserved, for his early lampoons on his neighbors have happily been lost, are equal in poetic spirit and metrical art to Whittier's "The Prisoner for Debt," to which they are strikingly similar in melancholic mood.

In 1846, at the age of 37, Lincoln conducted a literary correspondence with a friend, William Johnson by name, of like poetic tastes. In April of this year he wrote the following letter to Johnson:





St. NYC 1910

*J. J. [Signature]*  
50



*Gelert*  
*Pending*

July 27, 1979

Mr. Robert A. Gelert, Sr.  
9031 Bourbon Street  
Orange, California 92665

Dear Mr. Gelert:

As we purchased the last painting of Lincoln from life this year, one of our most valuable acquisitions ever, I am afraid that we cannot possibly purchase a casting of the fine bust you offer. To add insult to injury, we would very much like to retain the enclosures you sent us for our research files on Lincoln sculptors. Of course, we'll return them right away if you need them in order to offer the casting to another institution or collector.

Many thanks for considering our interest in Lincolniana.

Sincerely yours,

Mark E. Neely, Jr.

MEN/jaf

ROBERT A. GELERT

---

9031 Bourbon Street  
Orange, California 92665  
Phone: 714 / 998-8098

25 January 1980

Dr. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Director  
THE LOUIS A. WARREN LINCOLN LIBRARY & MUSEUM  
1300 South Clinton St.  
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801

Dear Dr. Neely:

I enjoyed talking to you this morning and picking up from where we left off last June in regards to your interest of the Johannes Gelert Lincoln portrait bust for your museum.

There are several new enclosures along with this letter that I shall define:

Enclosure No.

- 1) An up-dated recap of the sculptors academic and professional credentials and biographical references.
- 2) A magazine reprint, circa 1910, mostly about Gelert's works surrounding the Chicago area up to that time.
- 3) An interesting letter from the author of many famous Lincolnian specialized publications requesting the use of a photograph for the frontispiece of the book, "Poetic Lincoln", which was presented by Johannes Gelert to my aunt in 1916.
- 4) The subsequent, and allowed, photograph as requested in enclosure #3. This is the portrait bust that I am offering to your museum. (It is interesting to note that this book is a compilation of all the Lincoln sculpture made up to that time in this country, and that the Gelert portrait version was selected to enjoy the choice position in the publication. Undoubtedly, you have a copy of the book in your collection there.
- 5) This is the 13" high statuette of one of the early concepts for the Lincoln Memorial, Washington, when Johannes was working in collaboration with Daniel Chester French. Outside of the size of chair being enlarged, very little was modified in the final design composition. In view of the fact that French did not get commissioned for the Memorial by the architect, Henry Bacon, until 1913, it is plain to see where the original concept came from.

25 January 1980

Dr. Mark E. Neely, Jr.

Page Two

This seated Lincoln is a remarkable study and one of which I am very proud and extremely fortunate to have the original work. I just acquired this piece from my aunt within the last month and am now ready to accept orders for bronzes in a limited edition of 50 at the price of \$4,800 per casting in the first few serials.

The final two enclosures are colored photos of the life-sized portrait bust of Lincoln which you have not seen before. I think you will agree that they are a better representation than the ones which I forwarded to you last June.

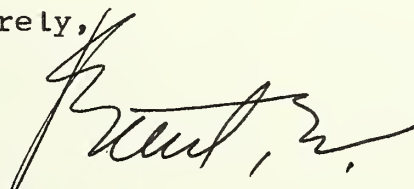
I would still like to see your Library/Museum have the first serial bronze of the edition on the portrait bust, as well as the newly available seated Lincoln. Of course, the terms and conditions of sale are the same as in my June 25 letter to you that went into all the necessary details and stipulations.

If you need a little more time to think about the portrait bust, why not be first in line for the smaller seated Lincoln by forwarding your check and purchase order so that I may start working with you. I think you will enjoy working with me; and I know you will be more than pleased with the finished pieces.

Lead time at my foundry is now about 4-6 weeks. Should you desire to order one, each, I would accept and honor your P.O. along with \$6,000 deposit in lieu of the normally required 50% each, totalling \$8,650. This should assist in your cash flow requirements.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Robert A. Gelert, Sr.', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert A. Gelert, Sr.

rag:b  
encl\_7





ROBERT A. GELERT

---

9031 Bourbon Street  
Orange, California 92665  
Phone: 714 / 998-8098

June 18, 1980

Mr. Mark E. Neely, Jr.  
THE LOUIS A. WARREN LINCOLN LIBRARY & MUSEUM  
1300 South Clinton St.  
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801

Dear Mr. Neely:

By my records it has been nearly one year since our last correspondence. At that time you had just acquired the last painting of Lincoln from life.

Hopefully, by this time, your cash flow has "healed" and you are under the freedom of a new fiscal budget.

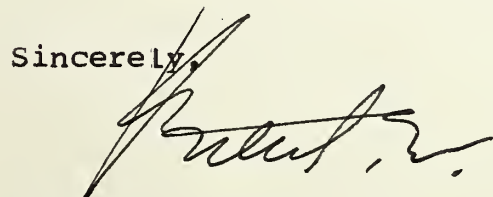
Of course the life-size portrait bust of Abraham Lincoln is still available to you and I feel certain that could add considerably to your museum collection. Two current colored photos are enclosed to refresh your memory on this piece as I believe you had returned all the previous shots to me last year.

Since our last correspondence I have been fortunate in the acquisition of the 13" high model of "Seated Lincoln" one of the early concept models for the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. This was made during 1909 in New York and during the time when Gelert was working closely and in collaboration with Daniel Chester French, whom, as you know, had the prime commission for the Memorial from his friend and architect, Henry Bacon. The "Seated Lincoln" is now being offered in a limited edition bronze. Should you be interested I will be glad to quote you accordingly.

Also enclosed with this letter is a recent compilation of the more important works by Gelert in tabular form. This is for your general interest and file.

I look forward to your current interest and comments.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Gelert, Sr.

rag:b  
encl

# J O H A N N E S   S O P H U S   G E L E R T

## MONUMENTS, MEMORIALS, AND PUBLIC WORKS:

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN MONUMENT	Chicago
BEETHOVEN MONUMENT	
HAYMARKET MONUMENT	
FORT DEARBORN MASSACRE	
LASALLE'S MARCH THROUGH ILLINOIS	
NEPTUNE	
THE HERALD	
THE HISTORY OF PRINTING	
GENERAL SHERIDAN- EQUESTRIAN	
ENLIGHTENMENT	Hackensack
INTERCESSION	Perth Amboy
GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON- EQUESTRIAN *	Philadelphia
NAPOLEON THE GREAT	St. Louis
GOthic ART	
EARNshaw MEMORIAL	Cincinnati
FURMAN MEMORIAL	Nashville
GENERAL U.S. GRANT	Galena
JULIUS CAESAR	Brooklyn
AUGUSTUS	
JUSTINIAN	
CICERO	
LINCOLN MEMORIAL *	Washington, D.C.
DENMARK MONUMENT	New York
DEWEY TRIUMPHAL ARCH *	
GENERAL SHERIDAN	
ST. AUGUSTINUS	Copenhagen
DAGMAR THEATRE	
PALACE TROCADERO	Paris

\* In Collaboration

## WORKS IN MUSEUMS AND COLLECTIONS:

AARHUS MUSEUM	Aarhus
NORDJYLLAND'S KUNSTMUSEUM	Aalborg
ART SOCIETY OF COPENHAGEN	Copenhagen
OLAF POULSEN MUSEUM	Fredensborg
INDUSTRIRADET	Copenhagen
CHICAGO ART INSTITUTE	Chicago
CHICAGO TRIBUNE	Chicago
NEWBERRY LIBRARY	Chicago
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY	Evanston
ST. LOUIS MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS	St. Louis
YALE UNIVERSITY	New Haven
BROOKLYN INSTITUTE OF ARTS & SCIENCES	Brooklyn
BOARD OF EDUCATION	Cleveland
ART CENTER OF THE ORANGES	East Orange
NEWARK MUSEUM	Newark
VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY	Nashville
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA	Berkeley



J O H A N N E S   S O P H U S   G E L E R T

PORTRAITS:

JOSEPH MEADE BAILEY	Chicago Judge
HUBERT HOWE BANCROFT	Historian & Publisher
CLARK E. CARR	U.S. Ambassador
ROBERT COLLYER	Unitarian Clergyman
J.B. DALHOFF	Industrialist
JAMES H. DOLE	Vice President- Chicago Art Institute
MARY BAKER EDDY	Founder- Christian Science Church
J.B.S. ESTRUP	Prime Minister to United States
LUDVIG HOLBERG	Danish Poet
HENRIK IBSEN	Danish Poet
JACOB A. RIIS	Journalist & Settlement Pioneer
LANGENBORG	Danish Actor
ABRAHAM LINCOLN	U.S. President
ORRINGTON LUNT	Trustee- Northwestern University
JOSEPH MEDILL	Publisher & Editor- Chicago Tribune
WALTER NEWBERRY	Industrialist
EMIL PAULSEN	Danish Actor
OLAF PAULSEN	Danish Actor
WM. FREDERICK POOLE	American Librarian
C.W. POST	Cereal Pioneer
JOHN WELLBORN ROOT	Chicago Architect
NIELS JUUL SIMONSEN	Danish Singer
PEDER SKRAM	Danish Actor
COL. JOHN F. STEVENS	Founder- City of Minneapolis
MARK TWAIN	Author & Humorist
WOODROW WILSON	U.S. President
LUDVIG WOLF	Danish Poet

OTHER IMPORTANT WORKS:

BACCANT  
BACCANTE  
THESEUS  
LITTLE ARCHITECT  
THE STRUGGLE FOR WORK  
EVENING PRAYERS  
CHRIST BLESSING CHILDREN  
WOUNDED SOLDIER  
ASCENSION OF THE SOUL  
THOR FIGHTING THE BULL  
THE LITTLE TURTLEPLAYERS

J O H A N N E S   S O P H U S   G E L E R T

CORRESPONDENT SCULPTORS:

Herbert Adams  
George E. Bissell  
Karl Bitter  
John J. Boyle  
William Couper  
Daniel Chester French  
Augustus Saint-Gaudens  
J. S. Hartley  
F. Hartzer  
Isidore Konti  
F. Kjeldberg

Charles A. Lopez  
Augustus Lukeman  
Philip Martiny  
F. Moynihan  
Charles H. Neihaus  
Bessie Potter  
A. Phimister Proctor  
F. Wellington Ruckstull  
Rudolf Siemering  
Lorado Taft  
J.Q.A. Ward  
Albert Wolff

COLLABORATING ARCHITECTS & ARTISTS:

Sir Caspar Purdon Clarke  
Charles Dana Gibson  
Cass Gilbert  
Charles R. Lamb  
Francis D. Millet  
McKim, Mead & White  
John W. Root

PATRONS:

Chicago College of Law  
E.V. Ekesen  
The Furman Family  
City of New York  
The Pillsbury Family  
Charles Yerkes  
Carl Wolfsohn

ROBERT A. GELERT

---

9031 Bourbon Street  
Orange, California 92665  
Phone: 714 / 998-8098

13 October 1980

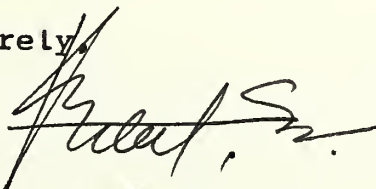
Mr. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Director  
THE LOUIS A. WARREN LINCOLN LIBRARY & MUSEUM  
1300 South Clinton St.  
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801

Dear Mr. Neely:

In about two weeks I shall be shipping a bronze bust of Portrait of Abraham Lincoln to a customer in the Chicago area. Two of such life-size bronzes were cast and patined at the same time at the foundry; and if you are still interested in having one of these limited editions, I could arrange to have these two castings shipped together and I would give you the benefit by paying all freight and insurance charges and deliver directly to your museum.

If this offer appeals to you, please let me know at the earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Gelert, Sr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert A. Gelert, Sr.

rag:b



*Gelert*

November 3, 1980

Mr. Robert A. Gelert, Sr.  
9031 Bourbon Street  
Orange, California 92665

Dear Mr. Gelert:

We have been fortunate recently in having a number of very fine Lincoln items offered to us. At this moment, I'm afraid, we must use our resources in other areas. One can never predict when things will come along, but I have learned that one must seize the opportunity, if one wants to acquire these items.

Sincerely yours,

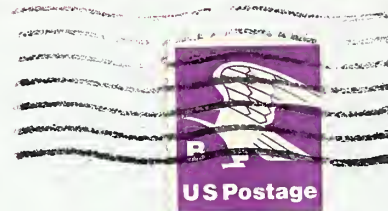
MEN/vpg

Mark E. Neely, Jr.

GELERT CLASSICS

32 Rocky Knoll Drive Irvine, California 92715

PHOTO  
ENCLOSED



Mr. Mark E. Neely, Jr.  
THE LOUIS A WARREN LINCOLN LIBRARY & MUSEUM  
1300 S. Clinton St.  
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801

# GELERT CLASSICS

*file : Gelert  
(Sculptor)*

12 August 1981

Mr. Mark E. Neely, Jr.  
THE LOUIS A. WARREN LINCOLN LIBRARY & MUSEUM  
1300 S. Clinton St.  
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801

Dear Mr. Neely:

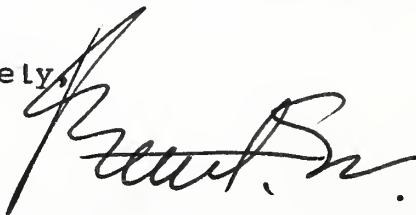
I thought I would just drop you a line to keep my name  
in front of you and to advise of my new address as follows:

2900 Madison Ave. C-25  
Fullerton, Calif. 92631  
Phone: 714/528-7107  
714/996-9298

The enclosed particulars about Gelert Lincolnian sculpture  
are self-explanatory and I thought you may be interested in  
them for your files. Are you presently in a position to  
acquire one of these fine works?

The Xerox of Lincoln is by the famed engraver Otto J. Schneider.  
I have an original pencil signed etching. Are you interested  
in the original, on embossed high rag content in sepia?

Sincerely,



Robert A. Gelert, Sr.

rag:b  
encl

*Xerox copy of  
of letter  
placed in  
engravers file*



ENCLOSURE

©

Schneider



# GELERT CLASSICS

Fellow Devotee to Lincoln,

By the very nature of your organization you obviously must have a keen awareness, if not an extreme interest and dedication to the immortal Abraham Lincoln. It is because of this that I would like to personally introduce you to two exceptional and rare works of Lincolniana.

I am the grandson of the internationally renown master sculptor, the late Johannes Sophus Gelert (1852-1923), who sculpted many works during the 19th century relating to the Civil War and Abraham Lincoln. Two original works having universal appeal have been selected for a limited edition in bronze and are being offered to the public for the first time.

**Portrait of Abraham Lincoln** is a magnificent life-size bust standing 31" high on an oak-leaved base. Weight is approximately 110 lbs. This portrayal of Lincoln, circa 1863, dramatically shows the rugged sensitivity and the wear plagued on our 16th President during his office. No finer likeness exists than this portrait which has captured his many features and noble character in extreme fidelity of detail from every angle of view. Its awesome life-likeness has caused many critics to acclaim this work as "the most sensitive and finest example of Lincolnian sculpture ever executed." The edition: 50. Current price: \$9,800.

Johannes Gelert executed several sketch-models for the Lincoln Monument at the Memorial in Washington. One such concept, **Seated Lincoln**, was sculpted two years prior to the commencement of the Memorial Monument. This 13" high statuette which reveals the pondering Lincoln in a union of humility yet towering strength is an inspirational study. . . a creditable complement to home or office. The edition: 75. Current price: \$5,500.

All bronzes are cast, finish patined to order, hand waxed and ready for prominent display. Each bronze shall be serialized, registered, and certificated to authenticity. Prices, which will continually escalate throughout the editions, shall be confirmed subject to earliest date of accepted order.

The enclosed testimonial letter from a Civil War Round Table Associate gives you assurance of satisfaction of this rare availability being a true investment of the past. . . for your future.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Gelert, Sr.

Harvey E. Lemmen  
7368 Tree Line Dr. SE  
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506

NOVEMBER 9, 1980

MR. ROBERT A. GELERT  
9031 BOURBON STREET  
ORANGE, CA 92665

DEAR MR. GELERT:

IT WAS A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU IN CHICAGO WHEN  
I PICKED UP THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BUST EXECUTED  
BY YOUR GRANDFATHER. I'M TRULY PLEASED WITH  
THE PORTRAIT OF LINCOLN. LINCOLN WAS A MAN  
OF GREAT DEPTH OF CHARACTER AND IT ALL SEEMS  
TO "COME OUT" IN THIS SCULPTURE.

YOUR GRANDFATHER WAS CERTAINLY AN OUTSTANDING  
ARTIST, NOT ONLY IN SKILL AND ARTISTIC GENIUS  
BUT ALSO IN UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE. I HOPE  
TO HAVE MORE OF HIS WORK IN THE FUTURE. AND  
I WHOLEHEARTEDLY RECOMMEND YOUR LIMITED EDI-  
TIONS OF HIS WORK.

SINCERELY,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Harvey E. Lemmen".

HARVEY E. LEMMEN



# Classic Collectable Sculpture

By R. A. Gelert, Sr.

Seldom does an opportunity present itself today where the serious investment collector, or art connoisseur, can acquire early serials under limited edition bronzes by one of the world's master sculptors of the 19th century. But such is now the case for a few selected works, heretofore unavailable to the general public, by the internationally recognized Danish-American sculptor, Johannes Sophus Gelert (1852-1923), a multiple Gold Medal recipient at exhibitions throughout Europe and the United States, where many of his works still adorn parks and museums. Some of his personal and remaining works of universal appeal, which have been family heirlooms for several generations, are currently being offered through the grandson of the sculptor in a small limited edition "Lost Wax Process" bronze from the original works.

Johannes Gelert, son of a noted Danish goldsmith who was appointed by Emperor Dom Pedro of Brazil as his Court Jeweler, was born in the village of Nybol Denmark. His early boyhood days spent modelling figurines of mud from the shoreline of the fjord revealed the embryo of a genius artist to Professor C.A. Berg who quickly apprenticed the young Gelert to Woodcarver at Teknologisk Institut in Copenhagen where he spent two and one-half years mastering his craft first in wood. His following five years were in study at the four hundred year old and prestigious Royal Danish Academy of Fine Art, majoring in sculpture, graduating with the highest honors and receiving the coveted Medal of the Academy.

To attain the highest level of perfection in his art, Johannes Gelert chose his post-graduate studies as a protege under the leading masters of Europe: In Stockholm under Professor F. Kjeldberg; under various professors in Paris; and under the professors, F. Hartzler, Rudolf Siemering, and Albert Wolff in Berlin, Munich and Dresden. By this time Gelert had become fluent in nine different languages and read everything obtainable on both Norse and Greek Mythology. It was no wonder, then, that when young Johannes Gelert entered into his first important competition at the International Exposition Salon at Paris in 1878, he attracted much attention with his dynamic group from Norse Mythology, "Thor Wrestling With A Bull," which was awarded an Honorable Mention.

The Royal Danish Government acknowledged Gelert's rising talent and potential when the Ministry of Education awarded Johannes Gelert a scholarship to study ancient and classical sculpture for two years in Rome. It was during this tenure that Gelert executed the life-size "Little Architect" that would be awarded the gold Medal in 1899 from the Art Club of Philadelphia and another Honorable Mention award at the Paris Salon in 1900.

But in Copenhagen during the year 1886, just a year before his emigration to the United States, Gelert executed the 17" high statuette, "Theseus, Victor Over The Minotaur," a subject from Greek Mythology and the epitome of perfection in sculpting the male anatomy. This work, now being offered in a limited edition bronze, was exhibited at the Columbian Exposition and World's Fair at Chicago in 1893 and entered into competition in 1902 at the American Art Society in Philadelphia where it was honored with its Gold Medal. By special invitation Gelert exhibited this well-known sculpture again at the National Academy Of Design, New York in 1912 and at The Pennsylvania Academy Of Fine Arts, Philadelphia in 1913. Only 75 serialized bronzes of this honored statuette are now available to the public.

Johannes Gelert established his first studios here in Chicago where many important monuments still remain as public works. The "Haymarket Monument," the Beethoven and Hans Christian Andersen Memorial Monuments in Lincoln Park are but a few of his representative works in that city. At Galena, Illinois Gelert's 14' bronze memorial monument of General U.S. Grant stands in the center of his home town typifying his neoclassic style and the return to naturalism.

At the Columbian Exposition of 1893 Gelert executed six 12' works displayed in the Grand Court of Honor. His competitive entry "The Struggle For Work," a massive group in plaster taken from a scene he witnessed in Manchester, England created a sensation at the World's Fair and was acclaimed as "The most powerful and original work, not only in America, but in the whole exhibition (world-wide realm) of sculpture". "The Struggle For Work" was about to be presented with the Gold Medal when Gelert, himself, was chosen as Judge on the International Jury of Awards.

It was during this same era that Johannes Gelert sculpted a life-size portrait bust of Abraham Lincoln, one of his favorite subjects. This bust, since preserved and which is now available as a collectable in a limited edition of only 50 bronzes has been reputed by many critics as "the most sensitive and finest example of Lincolnian sculpture ever executed." A proud owner of one of these Lincoln bronzes by Gelert has recently acclaimed of his possession; "Lincoln was a man of great depth of character and it all seems to 'come out' in this sculpture".

Before moving his studios to New York in 1898, the world-renown sculptor exhibited his life-size "Wounded American Soldier," at the Nashville Centennial Exposition at Buffalo in 1897 and collected another Gold Medal.

Gelert's works from his New York studios included the twelve foot marble monument, "Denmark," atop the U.S. Customhouse and four twelve foot marble statues representing "Roman Civilization" for the exterior of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences. But his continuing fascination with Abraham Lincoln led to the executions of several models for the up-coming Lincoln Memorial in Washington. One such concept of "Seated Lincoln" made by Gelert during 1909, two years prior to the start of the Memorial Monument, has been preserved through the years by his family. A limited edition of seventy-five bronzes is currently offered to the public on this magnificent 13" high study.

Unlike works of sculpture by living artists who can continually bring out new creations, once the editions of the late Johannes Gelert are depleted, none other will be available. This fact and the price structure on the limited editions to escalate with each successive serial bronze assures the collector that his particular sculpture will always be worth more than he originally purchased for. But equally important is the rare opportunity for him to acquire an authentic portion of fine art from the past by a sculptor of the highest credentials who was summarized by The Newark Sunday Call on October, 22, 1911 as "... a sculptor of international reputation. Here was a man who won plaudits of the world in his time and moved from land to land like a conquering hero".

GILBERT, JOHANNES

DRAWING 22

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(BUSTS)

